

NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION EQUITY POLICY

New Zealand



Policy Frameworks

Does equity with regard to supporting students from low-income or marginalized populations to enter or succeed in higher education feature in any government produced policy documents? If so, which government policy document(s) are these and can you provide website link(s) to them?

Equity is one of the government's key priorities for education and is embedded in a number of policies, and strategies that guide policy making through the following government policy documents:

- The Statement of National Education and Learning Priorities (NELP) and the Tertiary Education Strategy (TES): <https://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/overall-strategies-and-policies/the-statement-of-national-education-and-learning-priorities-nelp-and-the-tertiary-education-strategy-tes/>
- Education and Training Act 2020: <https://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/legislation/education-and-training-act-2020/>
- Action Plan for Pacific Education 2020-2030: <https://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/overall-strategies-and-policies/action-plan-for-pacific-education-2020-2030/>
- Tau Mai Te Reo: <https://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/overall-strategies-and-policies/tau-mai-te-reo/>
- Ka Hikitia: <https://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/overall-strategies-and-policies/ka-hikitia-ka-hapaitia/>
- Whakapūmautia, Papakōwhaitia, Tau Ana (the framework for conducting excellent education relationship with iwi): <https://pmawards.education.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Resources/c1cf8e1554/Whakapumautia-Papakowhaitia-Tau-ana.pdf>
- Employment Action Plans: <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/business-and-employment/employment-and-skills/employment-strategy/>

Under the current government, New Zealand also has an Associate Minister of Education with specific priorities for Māori education, including:

- ↘ Working to address systemic racism, discrimination and bullying to build teacher and system competence and to support Maori learner wellbeing and success
- ↘ Leading work on the government's response to settlements relating to the Treaty of Waitangi (a founding Treaty signed between Māori as indigenous people and the Crown), where they relate to education, including the Kaupapa Inquiry Programme and the Te Kohanga Reo National Trust's Waitangi Tribunal claim and subsequent recommendations; and
- ↘ Leading the relationship with Māori and Māori organisations.

There is also an Associate Minister of Education with specific priorities for Pacific education, including:

- ↘ Responsibility for and oversight of the Action Plan for Pacific Education; and
- ↘ Leading the relationship with Pacific organisations on education matters.

What policies and actions are described in these government policy documents in terms of supporting students from low-income or marginalized populations to enter or succeed in higher education?

Tertiary Education Strategy

The Tertiary Education Strategy comprises 5 objectives setting the context and priority areas for New Zealand's education work programme: learners at the centre, barrier free access, quality teaching and leadership, future of learning and work, and world-class inclusive public education. Priorities identified in

the strategy directly relating to equity include to:

- Ensure places of learning are safe, inclusive and free from discrimination and bullying
- Have high aspirations for every learner/ākonga, and support these by partnering with their whānau and communities to design and deliver education that responds to their needs, and sustains their identities, languages and cultures
- Reduce barriers to education for all, including for Māori and Pacific learners/ākonga, disabled learners/ākonga and those with learning support needs
 - Meaningfully incorporate te reo Māori and tikanga Māori into the everyday life of the place of learning
 - Develop staff to strengthen teaching, leadership and learner support capability across the education workforce

For each priority area there are a range of actions for the government and for tertiary education organisations set out, to ensure the strategy is implemented (see [here](#) for more information).

Action Plan for Pacific Education 2020-2030

The overarching objectives of the Action Plan for Pacific Education align with those of the Tertiary Education Strategy. Five key system shifts are identified in the plan that are needed for Pacific learners and families to meet the objectives:

- Work reciprocally with diverse Pacific communities to respond to unmet needs, with an initial focus on needs arising from the COVID-19 pandemic
- Confront systemic racism and discrimination in education
- Enable every teacher, leader and educational professional to take coordinated action to become culturally competent with diverse Pacific learners
- Partner with families to design education opportunities together with teachers, leaders and educational professionals so that aspirations for learning and employment can be met
- Grow, retain and value highly competent teachers, leaders and educational professionals of diverse Pacific heritages

A range of actions and programmes are being undertaken to implement the plan, see [here](#) for more information.

Education and Training Act 2020

The Education and Training Act 2020 updated the previous education legislation and makes it easier for those in the sector to understand their rights and obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi, between the Crown and Māori. It locates in one place the key provisions in the Bill that recognise and respect the Crown's responsibility to give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Section 4 of the Act specifies that the purpose of the Act is to establish an education system that 'honours Te Tiriti o Waitangi and supports Māori-Crown relationships.'

To provide 'equitable outcomes for all students', the Act also enables the Ministers of Education and Māori Crown relations: Te Arawhiti, to jointly issue a statement specifying what education agencies must do to give effect to Te Tiriti expectations in the Public Service Legislation Act. Consultation with Māori must be undertaken before the issuing of a statement.

Ka Hikitia

Ka Hikitia is a cross-agency strategy for the education sector that sets out how we will work with education services to achieve system shifts in education and support Māori learners and their whānau, hapū and iwi to achieve excellent and equitable outcomes. It provides an organising framework for the actions agencies take to ensure equitable outcomes for Māori.

Tau Mai Te Reo

Tau Mai Te Reo is a companion strategy to Ka Hikitia that focusses on supporting Māori language in both Māori medium and English medium education.

It sets out goals for the growth of Māori language:

- ➔ By 2040, 85% (or more) of New Zealanders will value the Māori language as a key part of national identity.
- ➔ By 2040, one million (or more) New Zealanders will have the ability and confidence to talk about at least basic things in the Māori language.
- ➔ By 2040, 150,000 Māori aged 15 years and over will use the Māori language at least as much as English.

Whakapūmāutia, Papakōwhaitia, Tau Ana

The framework for conducting excellent education relationships with iwi with the shared goal of Māori achieving education success as Māori. It acknowledges the importance of these relationships for ensuring that the education system better reflects the aspirations, culture and values of Māori.

Ōritetanga – Learner Success Work Programme

The Tertiary Education Commission's Ōritetanga - Learner Success work programme was introduced at the end of 2018. It aims to champion and drive better outcomes for all learners, particularly Māori and Pacific learners, who on-average have lower retention and completion than others.

The emphasis of this work is on the positive difference that can be made to lifelong outcomes for these learners through excellent, accessible tertiary education and career pathway planning. Developing a tertiary system that works well for all learners is complex and requires interventions and coordination in a wide range of areas. The Ōritetanga work programme requires ensuring five key things:

1. Learners and their influencers having the support and experiences to make good educational and career choices
2. Communities (including iwi/Māori and Pacific) having an empowered voice in shaping the system
3. Capable, focused and accountable tertiary education organisation leadership at all levels
4. Tertiary Education Commission investment processes support and incentivise change
5. Tertiary Education Commission having the internal capabilities and external relationships required to drive change.

This process aims to improve learner outcomes for all learners over time, through effecting wider system change approaches that include learner journey mapping, data analytics, effective student management systems, and targeted support and advice for learners.

Kōrero Mātauranga | Education Conversation

In 2018, the New Zealand Government started a series of education conversations to help build an education system that works for all children and young people. All New Zealanders were invited to participate, and especially those – such as children and young people, Māori, Pacific peoples, parents, disabled people and people with learning support needs – whose voices have not traditionally been heard in discussions about the future of education.

Over 43,000 learners, whānau and educators have contributed to the Kōrero Mātauranga | Education Conversation to date. The information gathered will be used to inform the refresh of key strategic documents, such as *Ka Hikitia*, *Tau Mai Te Reo* and the development of a new Action Plan for Pacific Education, as well as the overall Education Work Programme going forward.

Employment Strategy and Employment Action Plans

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment has published an employment strategy, outlining the Government's vision for the labour market and the changes it is implementing to improve employment outcomes for all learners, including youth, disabled peoples, Māori (indigenous populations), Pacific peoples, older workers and job seekers, refugees, recent migrants and ethnic communities.

The strategy sets out a roadmap for developing a series of Employment Action Plans to ensure that those who consistently experience poor labour market outcomes have the support they need develop their skills

and achieve their potential with fulfilling careers. The Employment Action Plans will detail a programme of actions for government agencies to improve education, training, and employment outcomes for these underserved population groups. A Youth Employment Action Plan has already been published, and more Employment Action Plans are being developed.

More information can be found [here](#).

Is there a standalone policy document dedicated to equity promotion in higher education? If so, which document(s) is/are these? Can you provide a link(s)?

- *Ka Hikitia* is dedicated to improving how the education system performs to ensure Māori students are enjoying and achieving education success as Māori. Despite *Ka Hikitia* having a strong evidence base and rationale, being well received by the sector and supported by Māori, reviews have found that *Ka Hikitia* had limited success due to a number of factors, including the lack of an implementation plan.
- The *Pasifika Education Plan* sets out the strategic direction for Pacific education in New Zealand and aims to lift the level of urgency and pace in delivering change more quickly, in sustainable and collaborative ways between parents and teachers, community groups and education providers. The Plan includes goals for tertiary education around increasing participation, retention and completion of tertiary level qualifications and a target around parity in tertiary education.

Which equity target groups are identified in the policy documents? (Please choose as many groups as apply in your own country)

The following table shows the relevant equity target groups:

Target Group	Yes/No?
Low-income or lower socio-economic background students	Yes
Gender groups	Yes
Older or mature learners	Yes
Indigenous populations (Māori)	Yes
People from rural backgrounds	No
Other groups under-represented in HE	Yes
Students with disability	Yes
Victims of sexual and gender violence	No
Members of the LGBT community	Yes
Refugees of all kinds (internally and externally displaced; deported)	Yes
Children of people affected by historical violence	No
Students with care experience, orphans, youth without parental care.	No
Other (please specify below):	Yes
Pacific populations	Yes
Learners with learning support needs (including neurodiverse learners)	Yes
Recent migrants and ethnic communities	Yes

Does the country have concrete targets for the participation of specific equity groups in higher education?

- In the context of the *Ōritetanga – Learner Success* work programme, the Tertiary Education Commission has set an ambitious five-year goal to achieve **patterns of participation** and **achievement** for Māori and Pacific learners in tertiary education that are the same as for other learners, and that will deliver comparable post-study outcomes for graduates over time.
- The *Pasifika Education Plan* sets out the strategic direction for Pacific education in New Zealand and aims to lift the level of urgency and pace in delivering change more quickly, in sustainable and collaborative ways between parents and teachers, community groups and education providers. The Plan includes a target that Pacific learners participate and achieve at all levels at least on a par with other learners in tertiary education.

Which agency has responsibility for policies related to equity in student participation/success in higher education?

Primarily, this responsibility sits with the Ministry of Education. Other education agencies such as the Tertiary Education Commission and New Zealand Qualifications Authority have a role in implementing government strategies related to equity.

Other government agencies have shared responsibilities related to student participation/success in higher education, including:

- ➔ the Ministry of Social Development (with regards to student loan funding);
- ➔ the Ministry of Health (with regards to health and wellbeing of students); and
- ➔ the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (with regards to Employment

Action Plans aimed at improving education, training, and employment outcomes for all people, especially disabled people, Māori and Pacific peoples, older works, job seekers, refugees, recent migrants and ethnic communities).

Which stakeholder groups are consulted during the equity policy formulation? (Please choose all the stakeholders that are invited to the consultation process in your own country)

The following table shows the relevant stakeholder groups:

Stakeholder Group	Yes/No
Higher Education Institutions' Associations	Yes
Civil society organisations	Yes
Private sector organisations	Yes
International Organisations	No
Student Organisations/Association	Yes
Others: (Please specify below)	Yes
Indigenous populations	Yes
Learners' families and communities	Yes
Workplaces, industries, and employers	Yes
Sector reference/advisory groups	Yes
Schools	Yes

Achieving Policy Targets

Are there any non-monetary instruments such as outreach work between schools and universities, reforms to university admission etc. used to promote access/success for students from specific equity groups in higher education? If so, can you describe what they are?

Wānanga

The New Zealand government uniquely recognizes Māori tertiary education institutions under [section 268 of the Education and Training Act 2020](#). There are currently three such institutions, known as wānanga: “A wananga is characterized by teaching and research that maintains, advances, and disseminates knowledge and develops intellectual independence, and assists the application of knowledge regarding ahuatanga Māori (Māori tradition) according to tikanga Māori (Māori custom).” (<https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/audience-pages/wananga/>). The three wānanga recognised under the Act are [Te Wananga o Raukawa](#), [Te Wananga o Aotearoa](#) and [Te Whare Wananga o Awanuiarangi](#).

Collectively, the wānanga support and promote access, participation, and success for Māori learners (indigenous populations) in higher education.

Te Pūkenga

[Te Pūkenga](#) is a tertiary education provider which works with employers and learners to bring together on-the-job, on campus, and online vocational education and training. Te Pūkenga's core functions are specified in [section 315 of the Education and Training Act 2020](#).

[Schedule 13 of the Education and Training Act 2020](#) provides a charter for Te Pūkenga, which notably requires Te Pūkenga to:

- Empower students and staff, including by developing meaningful relationships with communities, including Māori (indigenous populations) and Pacific communities;
- Hold inclusivity and equity as core principles, including recognising and valuing the diversity of all its learners, providing the unique types of support different learners need to succeed, promoting equity of access and learning opportunities across the country, and working towards equity for learners and staff of different genders, ethnicities, cultures, and abilities;
- Give effect to the Treaty of Waitangi (a founding Treaty between Māori as indigenous people, and the Crown), support Māori-Crown relationships, and work to improve outcomes for Māori learners and populations;
- Meet the needs of all its learners, in particular those who are under-served by the education system, including (without limitation) Māori, Pacific, and disabled learners;
- And work collaboratively with schools, and other tertiary education organisations (including wānanga) to improve the outcomes of the education system as a whole, including the transition of learners into employment.

Codes of pastoral care

Under [section 534 of the Education and Training Act 2020](#), the Minister may issue codes of practice to provide for the pastoral care of domestic and international tertiary learners. There are currently two codes – one for [domestic tertiary learners](#), and one for [international tertiary and school learners](#). These will be replaced by a new code which covers all tertiary learners from 1 January 2022.

The codes are intended to raise the prominence of wellbeing and safety as a precondition to success in education. They aim to foster conditions for success and for support of more equitable outcomes for diverse learners, including Māori, Pacific, disabled, LGBTQIA+, ethnic or migrant, former refugee, and international learners. In doing so, the codes reinforce the Government's strategic direction for a learner-centred education system and high-value international education. It also reflects the Government's obligations to honour the Treaty of Waitangi (a founding Treaty between Māori as indigenous people, and the Crown), and support Māori-Crown relationships.

More information on the codes of pastoral care can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

Are there any financial instruments such as bursaries, scholarships and loans used to promote access/success for students from specific equity groups in higher education? If so, can you describe what they are?

- For learners from low-income backgrounds, student allowances and accommodation benefits are available to help with living expenses during study, in addition to student loans and fees free tertiary education policy (eligible first-time learners can get one year's study or two year's training fees-free in NZ).
- In addition, there is a range of equity funding available for tertiary education organisations to improve access, participation, and achievement of Māori and Pasifika learners at higher levels of the tertiary education system, as well as participation and achievement of students with disabilities.
- The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) also has developed the Ōritetanga Learner Success

Framework, which aims at system-level shifts to lift participation and achievement of Māori and Pacific learners in tertiary education. The TEC has partnered with a range of tertiary education organisations to fund projects that support the engagement and participation of learners.

Who is responsible for monitoring the impact of measures used to promote access/success for students from specific equity groups in higher education?

- The Ministry of Education has responsibility for monitoring the impact of policies on learners from specific equity groups.
- The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) is required by the Education and Training Act 2020 to give effect to the Tertiary Education Strategy through the investment process. As part of this, the TEC is responsible for publishing guidance on the content and criteria for assessment of Tertiary Education Organisations' (TEOs) investment plans, and determining and allocating the amount of funding to TEOs. The TEC also has a role in building the capability of TEOs as part of giving effect to the Tertiary Education Strategy. In exercising its other functions, the TEC must have regard to the Tertiary Education Strategy - this means that TEC's activities outside of the investment planning process should be consistent with the priorities and direction set out in the Tertiary Education Strategy.
- The New Zealand Qualifications Agency (NZQA) is required by the Education and Training Act 2020 to have regard for the Tertiary Education Strategy. This means that NZQA's activities, including its quality assurance functions, should be consistent with the priorities and direction set out in the Tertiary Education Strategy.

What instruments, methods and data are in place to carry out the monitoring and evaluation?

TEOs are required to describe in their proposed investment plans how they will give effect to the Government's current and medium-term priorities as described in the Tertiary Education Strategy. This means that TEOs should think about how they will reflect the Tertiary Education Strategy priorities in their policies and practices and inform TEC about this through their investment plans.

What kind of autonomy do higher education institutions enjoy in reaching the policy targets set by government?

Higher education institutions have autonomy regarding their academic approach, management and delivery of teaching and assessment, and research. They also have autonomy over recruitment and appointment decisions.

Funding allocation is guided by the Tertiary Education Strategy. The TEC is responsible for ensuring funding achieves the Government's priorities and can impose funding conditions. If organisations are not meeting policy targets or certain criteria, they may not receive funding.

How do you see the role of inter-governmental/international organisations in supporting higher education equity policies? In which areas would be their contribution the most valuable? (1= most valuable contribution 4=least valuable contribution)

No information was available on areas where organisations could support higher education equity policies as of this report.

COVID-19 and Equitable Access and Success in Higher Education

How, if at all, has Covid-19 affected the existence and implementation of policies designed to encourage greater access and success on higher education of those from low-income/marginalized groups?

Māori and Pacific learners, those from diverse ethnic communities, disabled people, and people from disadvantaged backgrounds already experience or risk poorer education and employment outcomes and are likely to be disproportionately affected by the labour market impacts of COVID-19. This, and what we learned about the experience of learners during COVID-19, informed the development of the Tertiary Education Strategy and contributed to the priorities identified in those strategies.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and its impact on Pacific learners, the Ministry of Education established the Pacific Education Support Fund and the Pacific Education Innovation Fund. The Support Fund aims to help fund community providers, groups, and organisations that help learners, and their families, meet education and wellbeing needs arising from, and/or exacerbated by, COVID-19. The Innovation Fund provides targeted funding to support innovative practices that support Pacific learners' wellbeing and curriculum needs, where they have been impacted by COVID-19. The Innovation Fund is open to educators, places of learning, community groups, providers, researchers and academics.

Sources

This country brief was prepared as part of the [“ASEM National Equity Policies in Higher Education”](#) report, a collaboration between the [Asia-Europe Foundation \(ASEF\)](#) and the [National Education Opportunities Network \(NEON\)](#). The report was launched at the [8th ASEF Regional Conference on Higher Education \(ARC8\)](#) on *“Inclusive and Diverse Higher Education in Asia and Europe”* on 10 September 2021.

All information in this country brief was provided by the Ministry of Education of New Zealand, as of 15 July 2021.